

AMENDMENTS THE SPECIFICATION

Applicants amend the Specification as follows:

Replace ¶ [0022] spanning pages 11-13 with the following:

[0022] Therefore, the method of the present invention is characterized in that an aqueous liquid containing polymerized catechins and non-polymerized catechins is brought into contact with an adsorbent selected from the group consisting of activated charcoal and an adsorbent resin as the aqueous liquid is held at a temperature of at least 50°C, whereby the non-polymerized catechins are selectively removed so that the ratio of the polymerized catechins to the non-polymerized catechins is made higher than in the original aqueous liquid.

Temperature

Setting the temperature at 50°C or higher is an essential condition for the present invention to ensure that ~~polymerized~~ non-polymerized catechins are selectively adsorbed on the adsorbent so that non-polymerized catechins are removed; at lower temperatures, say, room temperature, it is impossible to selectively separate the polymerized catechins from the non-polymerized catechins. The temperature has no particular upper limit and any temperature up to the boiling point may be employed to implement the present invention. If desired, temperatures exceeding 100°C may be employed under super-atmospheric pressure.

Starting material

The aqueous liquid containing the polymerized catechins and non-polymerized catechins is not limited in any particular way but the method of the present invention is useful for efficiently separating the polymerized catechins from the non-polymerized catechins typically in liquid extracts of plants such as tea, in particular, oolong tea. The following explanation refers to oolong tea but this is not the sole example of the present invention.

Pretreatments

The starting material containing polymerized catechins and non-polymerized catechins, for example, leaves of oolong tea are optionally shredded and then extracted appropriately with water. The temperature of the water used for extraction is not limited to any particular value; however, in order to improve the extraction efficiency by shortening the extraction time, the temperature is preferably 50-99°C, more preferably 80-99°C. In order to render the liquid extract slightly alkaline, sodium hydrogencarbonate may be added to it before use. Sodium hydrogencarbonate may be added at any concentration from zero up to saturation. For example, sodium hydrogencarbonate may be added in an amount of 1.0 - 2.0 g per liter of warm water; alternatively, it may be added in an amount that gives a pH of 8.0 - 8.5, preferably about 8.2. Sodium hydrogencarbonate may be replaced by other weakly basic substances of high safety. After the extraction step, settling, centrifugation and/or filtration may be performed in order to remove the solids; if desired, vitamin C (VC) may be added.